

Report

Report to:	Climate Change and Sustainability Committee
Date of Meeting:	3 November 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Community Grants (Climate Emergency Fund and Food Strategy Support Fund)
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:

- ♦ inform members of the Council's plans to formally launch the Climate Emergency Fund and Food Strategy Support Fund community grants schemes

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Committee is asked to note the following recommendation:

- (1) that the plans for the launch of the community grants schemes, as detailed in the report, be noted.

3. Background

3.1. The 2021/2022 Revenue Budget was approved by Council on 24 February 2021. This included a package of investments totalling £10.054m, of which £2m was allocated for a Climate Emergency Fund and £0.3m for a Food Strategy Support Fund.

3.2. A further report to the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee on 28 April 2021 informed members of the range and scope of the areas to which the £2m climate challenge fund would be directed. The report highlighted the proposal to develop a small grant fund for local groups and schools, and it is recommended that a similar proposal is introduced for an element of the Food Strategy Support funding.

3.3. It is proposed that £150,000 of the Climate Emergency Fund and £20,000 of the Food Strategy Support Fund be set aside to allow local community groups to submit bids to develop projects and initiatives aligned to these funding streams.

4. Proposed Schemes

4.1. It is proposed that £75,000 is allocated from the Climate Emergency Fund and £10,000 from the Food Strategy Support Fund in 2022/2023 and 2023/2024, with the formal bidding process commencing in January each year. Groups will be able to apply for funding up to £2,500 and £1,000 respectively. The maximum bid values will be reviewed in 2022/2023 to ensure that are reflective of potential bids for 2023/2024. Examples of bid submissions from community groups could be the purchase of gardening equipment (Food Strategy Support Fund) or the start-up of a repair and reuse service (Climate Emergency Fund).

- 4.2. Promotion of the grants scheme will be advertised through social media, emails to community groups, community councils, and with the help of partners (e.g. VASLan).
- 4.3. Community groups will bid for grants using a community grants application form specifically developed for the funds. It will be the role of the new Development Officer (Sustainable Development Funding) to process these application forms. The Development Officer will also work closely with the community groups to help them complete application forms if this is required, and signpost them to further relevant funding and support.
- 4.4. The Development Officer will be supported in the decision-making on the applications by the other Sustainable Development Officers within the CER Performance and Development team. Further information will be sought from other Council services where relevant (e.g. Amenity Services for food growing projects). Projects will be assessed against a range of criteria related to potential environmental impacts (e.g., improved air quality, increased active travel opportunities, increased/enhanced urban greenspace), and in the case of the Food Strategy Support Fund, groups will be expected to show how the project meets the aims of the Good Food Strategy and/or the Food Growing Strategy. Applicants will also be required to answer questions on, for example, whether there is match funding, how scalable the activity is, how many people will benefit from the project, and how success will be measured. Completion of the above will help gauge whether proposed projects are progressing the objectives of the Council Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy, the Good Food Strategy and the Food Growing Strategy. Application forms will then be circulated and discussed at Climate Change and Sustainability Steering Group meetings and a final group decision will be made on whether the bid should be approved.
- 4.5. The new Development Officer (Sustainable Development Funding) will monitor draw down of the funds for each project and will request successful applicants to provide six monthly updates on the progress of their projects (this may be provided in the form of case-studies). Information on projects will then be presented to the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee within an annual report to keep members informed on the development/implementation of the community projects and the benefits arising from the projects for the local community.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 The Development Officer (Sustainable Development Funding) commences employment on 1 November 2021 and will be responsible for administering the fund. It is expected that she will work with the Corporate Communications Team to develop the promotional material in anticipation of the launch date in January 2022. In the first year of the fund, she will also assess whether a cut off period is required in terms of the bid submissions, and any required changes to the timescales for submitting bids will be implemented the following year.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. Processing the community grants process will be the key task of the new Development Officer (Sustainable Development Funding).
- 6.2. Applications will be reviewed by officers within the Performance and Development team whose remit covers sustainable development. Support will be sought from relevant Council services, and the applications will be referred to the Climate Change and Sustainability Steering Group for approval.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. £150,000 of the Climate Challenge Fund and £20,000 of the Food Strategy Support Fund will be used to support local community groups. Funding was identified as part of the 2021/2022 Revenue Budget approved by members at the full Council meeting on 24 February 2021.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 8.1. The Scottish Government is committed to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with interim reduction targets of 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040 (based on 1990 levels) and becoming carbon neutral by 2040. The Council has an obligation to contribute to these targets and fulfil its duties under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.
- 8.2. Investment in these community grants is helping the Council contribute to these national targets.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1. There are no implications for risk in terms of the information contained within this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy nor recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

Michael McGlynn

Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

12 October 2021

Links to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ♦ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities.

Previous References

- ♦ Climate Change and Sustainability Committee 28 April 2021 – Climate Challenge South Lanarkshire Fund

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:

Michelle Wilkie (Performance and Policy Development Manager)

Ext: 5302 (Tel: 01698 455302)

E-mail: michelle.wilkie@southlanarkshire.gov.uk.